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AUTHOR Demery, Marie
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ABSTRACT

Likert-type rating scales were designed and used to help college students perceive, understand, and value the beauty and content of a piece of art. The subjects for the project were 100 college students enrolled in two art appreciation courses at Texas College. Their classification ranged from freshman to senior, with majors mainly in business, the social sciences, and education. Seven varied formats of the rating scale were designed to give students an opportunity to practice viewing "research art," an experimental combination of instructional design, technology, and traditional and modern art techniques and materials. Students were asked to rate shades of color, line, dot, and movement; a good dark-to-light range of color; characteristics of pinch-pot sculpture; and abstract and realistic art groups. They had to determine if a piece of art was a drawing or a painting, choose the most original pieces of art, and indicate their favorite pieces. The scales improved students' art appreciation skills. When students did return to a museum environment, they became absorbed in the process of viewing, comprehending, and appreciating art without the aid of any Likert-type rating scale. The eight scales are included in the paper. (RM)

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# The Art Appreciation Component of Visual Literacy: Examples of Guided Approaches to Viewing Art

Marie Demery, Ph.D.

Texas College

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Running head: The Art Appreciation Component

## Abstract

What teaching-learning strategy can be used to involve all students of art appreciation courses in the process of viewing art? Observations of students on several museum field trips provoked this question, for virtually no interest was displayed in viewing art. Most students merely glanced at images and then within a matter of minutes were ready to leave the museum. However, the answer to the above question changed the viewing behavior of all students in two art appreciation courses. A Likert-type rating scale, the teaching-learning strategy, was designed and used as a series of independent practice exercises for seeing and thinking about art. As a result of using this instrument, students experienced the art appreciation component of visual literacy.

## The Art Appreciation Component of Visual Literacy: Examples of Guided Approaches to Viewing Art

What teaching-learning strategy can be used to involve all students of art appreciation courses in the process of viewing art? Observations of students on several museum field trips provoked this question, for virtually no interest was displayed in viewing art. Most students merely glanced at images and then within a matter of minutes were ready to leave the museum. However, the answer to the above question changed the viewing behavior of all students in two art appreciation courses. A Likert-type rating scale, the teaching-learning strategy, was designed and used as a series of independent practice exercises for seeing and thinking about art. As a result of using this instrument, students experienced the appreciation component of visual literacy: "To comprehend and enjoy the masterworks of visual communication" (Debes, 1969, p. 27); Elwell & Hess, 1979, p. 28; Flynn, 1972, p. 42; Purvis, 1973, p. 714).

Because of the time constraint, this visual literacy project is a preliminary stage to formal research. The limitation is understandable, for this author, like other classroom instructors, is always searching for ways to secure more time for such needed research in visual literacy (Griffith & Miner, 1972b).

This project was developed and implemented in accordance with the convictions of Feldman (1978b) and Osborne (1970) that art appreciation is a skill that can be acquired, cultivated, and refined. Involving the use and refinement of perception, such a skill cannot be acquired from textbooks, but from practice and trial and error. In the process of acquiring new ways of seeing, we develop a discipline for concentration and absorption which results in satisfaction, enjoyment, and comprehension of a work of art.

Perception, then, like art appreciation, is a skill that is acquired (Mangan, 1978). This kind of educational training cannot be taken for granted, for it is this skill, the nucleus of visual literacy, that increases our awareness of art, ourselves, others, and the environment. Once activated, seeing becomes a never ending process: the more we see, the more we see . . . (Nelson, 1977).

However, if there is no response to a given work of art there can be no appreciation. But when we do respond to a work of art, we become aware of the power of that form. The intensity of this power may range from delighting to shocking us (Russell, 1984).

For the purpose of this project, art appreciation has been defined as an acquired skill which enables us to perceive, understand, and value the beauty and content of a work of art. As a result of this perceptual and aesthetic

interaction, we may experience a degree of satisfaction, enjoyment, disturbance, or shock (Feldmand, 1978a; Hastie & Schmidt, 1969).

Ironically, there are false assumptions about art appreciation and perception. There is the assumption that all art history or studio courses will teach college students ways of perceiving and comprehending their responses to art (Foss, 1980). The above assumption may be a possible explanation for another belief that people of exceptional artistic talent and training will be "equally endowed for appreciation in all the arts" (Osborne, p. 4).

Some museum educators also maintain that schools prepare people more for using resources of the library than the museum for self-directed, lifelong learning. They further note that the development of skills in art appreciation and perception has been conspiciously omitted on all educational levels--elementary, secondary, postsecondary (Martinello & Cook, 1981).

The preceding data confirm the need for the design and use of teaching-learning strategies that will help people of all ages to view, comprehend, and appreciate art. One strategy is the gallery self-guided study sheet. Zeller (1984) designed and used such a study sheet over a two-year period with 176 seventh and eighth grade students from the

Minneapolis Public Schools and during a three-year period with approximately 800 teachers in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts workshops. Use of these self-guided study sheets yielded positive outcomes. Because their observations were directed, students were motivated to talk about art during the museum visit and in classroom discussion. They were also free to view art at their own pace, individually, in pairs, or in small groups. As a result, students and teachers had access to a structure that combined the learning activities of the museum and the classroom.

Based on a search of the literature, another teaching-learning strategy for visual literacy projects is the psychological scaling method (Griffith & Miner, 1972a). Shoemaker (1984) used a 1-10 point rating scale as a pretest and posttest in an appreciation lesson for helping adolescents to perceive realistic and abstract content in art. The scores of the pretest and posttest indicated that this particular age group needed "specific, direct instructions for what to look for in a work of art and how to look for it" (p. 27).

A search of the literature also revealed that the most effective psychological scaling method for the objectives of this particular project was the Likert-type rating scale, a widely used investigative instrument. Because of its limitless variety of formats, the scale was used effectively

as a series of independent studies. These studies enabled large numbers of students to view art at their own pace, without direct instructor participation. The students also found the scale to be interesting and easy to use within a short period of time. As a result, they were able to interact with art on a perceptual, aesthetic, and subjective basis. There were no right or wrong answers. Then, like the camera, this scale allowed students to focus on specific aesthetic qualities. Such concentration, if only for a few seconds, enabled them to see what they would not have seen through a mere glance at works of art. This rating scale, thus, in varied formats, became an important source for art appreciation, documentation, and statistics for future research (Barley, 1969; Behling, 1975; Chapnick, 1983; Clover, 1959; Cronbach, 1970; Debes & Williams, 1974; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Fransecky, 1969; Gorden, 1977; Helmstadter, 1970; Miller, 1983; Oppenheim, 1966; Satterthwaite, 1977; Sellitz, Wrightman & Cook, 1976; Shaw & Wright, 1967).

The subjects for this project were 100 college students enrolled in two art appreciation courses at Texas College; 33 students for the 1983 fall semester; 67 students for the 1984 spring semester. Their classifications ranged from freshman to senior, with majors mainly in business, social science, and education.

All two-dimensional art for this project was created by this author. Such forms were created on paper, size 8"x 10" each, and temporarily displayed during the exhibit periods in plastic clearview frames. This kind of imagery has been entitled "Research Art" to denote an ongoing experimental combination of instructional design, technology, traditional and modern art techniques and materials. Such art is a reflection of a ten-year plan of study (1983-1993) devoted to a synthesis of the above, emphasizing the components of instruction, creation, and appreciation.

Seven varied formats of the Likert-type rating scale was designed to give students an opportunity to practice viewing research art mainly on the campus of Texas College. Such tools were effective. When students did return to a museum environment, they became absorbed in the process of viewing, comprehending, and appreciating art, without the aid of any Likert-type rating scale. See rating scales on the following pages.

Research Art I:
Photocopy Experiments in Design, Sketching, Crosshatching, and Painting (November 14-18, 1983)

This exhibit of experimental works of art shows designed shapes of color, line, dot, and movement. As you view and think about these shapes, rate them on the following scale of 1 to 5. Please check appropriate blanks below.

| | Superior (5) | Excellent (4) | Good (3) | Fair (2) | Poor (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1--Waiting | | | | | |
| 1A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 1B. Crosshatching. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 1C. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 2--Batting | | | | | |
| 2A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2B. Crosshatching. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2C. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 3--Recovering | | | | | |
| 3A. Crosshatching. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3B. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 4--Thinking | | | | | |
| 4A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4B. Crosshatching. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 5--Striking | | | | | |
| 5A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5B. Painting I. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5C. Painting II. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 6--Intercepting | | | | | |
| 6A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6B. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 7--Throwing | | | | | |
| 7A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 7B. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 8--Defending | | | | | |
| 8A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 8B. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 9--Racing | | | | | |
| 9A. Sketch. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 9B. Painting. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

What do you think of this exhibit idea?

__ Positive
__ Negative
__ No Opinion

Research Art II:
Blue Pastel Value Studies of Single Still Life Objects
(November 28 - December 2, 1983)

The word "value" in the visual arts means a dark to light range of color. Value in these still life objects on display ranges from dark, medium dark, medium light to light. Which still life objects show a good value range? Please respond to this question by checking appropriate blanks below.

| | Strongly Agree (5) | Agree (4) | Undecided (3) | Disagree (2) | Strongly Disagree (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Banana Group | | | | | |
| 1. Upright Left. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Upright Right. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| The Apple Group | | | | | |
| 3. Stem Left I. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Stem Left II. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| The Onion Group | | | | | |
| 5. Tip Left. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6. Right Tip. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| The Pear Group I | | | | | |
| 7. Frontal Right. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 8. Bottom. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| The Pear Group II | | | | | |
| 9. Side Right. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 10. Bottom Side. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| The Lemon Group | | | | | |
| 11. Side Nipple. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 12. Upright Nipple. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

What is your favorite still life object?

Number_____

What do you think of this exhibit idea?

__ Positive
__ Negative
__ No Opinion

Research Art III: Pinch Pot Sculpture*

This work on display has been created by students and faculty who have had a range of art experiences--from many courses to this "first time activity" with pinch pot sculpture. The major characteristics of these ceramics are color and texture; some shapes may or may not include certain kinds of surface designs. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate the characteristics of these forms as a group in shelves 1 to 12 of this Hedge display case. Please check appropriate blanks below.

| | Like Very Much (5) | Like (4) | Do Not Like Nor Dislike (3) | Dislike (2) | Dislike Very Much (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Shelf 1. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 2. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 3. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 4. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 5. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 6. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 7. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 8. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 9. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 10. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 11. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Shelf 12. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

What is your favorite pinch pot sculpture?

Number _____

What do you think of this exhibit idea?

__ Positive
__ Negative
__ No Opinion

*This particular exhibit was presented at the Public Library, Tyler, Texas, January 1984.

Research Art IV: Facial Designs in Blackness
(January 17-19, 1984)

As shown in this exhibit, there can be a close relationship between drawing and painting. Drawing can provide a structure or skeleton for painting. For the rating of each group of subjects, please check appropriate blanks below.

| Subjects | Favorite Drawing | Favorite Painting | Favorite Both | Neither | Undecided |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Scientist. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Grandfather. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Grandmother. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Nephew--Age 2. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Niece--Month 2. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6. Nephew--Age 5. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 7. Opera Singer. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 8. Runner. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 9. Grief--1983--Beirut. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 10. Preacher--Goodman Comes Home. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 11. Grief--1983--Lebanon. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 12. Politician. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

What is your favorite drawing?

Number_____

What is your favorite painting?

Number_____

What do you think of this exhibit idea?

__ Positive
__ Negative
__ No Opinion

Note: The drawings were reproduced for painting through the simple process of photocopying.

Research Art V: Abstraction and Realism Exhibition
(March 15, 1984)

Like all art techniques, drawing and painting can be used for creating either abstract or realistic images. On a scale of 1 to 5, rate these abstract and realistic art groups by checking the appropriate blanks below.

| | Like Very Much (5) | Like (4) | Do Not Like Nor Dislike (3) | Dislike (2) | Dislike Very Much (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 2. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 3. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 4. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 5. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 6. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

Please indicate below your favorite--

Line Ink Drawing. Number_____

Conte Crayon Drawing. Number_____

Painting of Human Figure. Number_____

Black Facial Abstraction. Number_____

Abstract Drawing. Number_____

Abstract Painting. Number_____

Note: Repetition of images was achieved through the photocopying process.

Research Art VI: A Three-Part Visual Literacy Exhibit
(March 22, 1984)

Please use this form to participate in a three-part visual literacy process of intellectually seeing and thinking about art.

Part I--Most Favorite
View the 30 works of art on display. Select and indicate below your most favorite:

Number_____

Part II--Art Groups
On a scale of 1 to 5, rate these 6 art groups by checking the appropriate blanks below. Each group consists of 5 art forms.

| | Like Very Much (5) | Like (4) | Do Not Like Nor Dislike (3) | Dislike (2) | Dislike Very Much (1) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Group 1. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 2. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 3. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 4. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 5. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| Group 6. | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

Part III--Most Favorite from Each Art Group
Select and indicate below your favorite from each art group--

Group 1--Portrait of an Astronaut. Number_____

Group 2--Abstraction. Number_____

Group 3--Still Life. Number_____

Group 4--Portrait of a Woman. Number_____

Group 5--Portrait of a Man. Number_____

Group 6--Portrait of a Child. Number_____

Research Art VII: Originality and Visual Literacy
(April 17, 1984)

Based on a summary of research data, a universal definition of originality is making the familiar unusual. The unusual will appear to the creator and to the viewer as a surprise, unexpected result and/or satisfying result.

Step 1
View the entire collection of art. Select and indicate below what you consider to be the most original work of art in this exhibit.
Number_____

Step 2
Then, continuing to use the above definition of originality, rate each work in this exhibit by checking appropriate blanks below.

| | Original (4) | Not Original Nor Unoriginal (3) | Unoriginal (2) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The Page | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 2. Front Desk | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 3. Reading | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 4. Shelled Peanuts | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 5. Three Peanuts | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 6. Tall Bottles | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 7. Two Bottles | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 8. Rocks | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 9. Lighthouse | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 10. Rooftops | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 11. Three Windows | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 12. Two Pears | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 13. Apple | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 14. Abstract Drawing | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 15. Abstract Painting | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 16. Batting | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 17. Thinking | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 18. Waiting | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 19. Jason | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 20. Abstract Face | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 21. Jennifer | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 22. Vincent | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 23. Viet Nam | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 24. Courtney | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |
| 25. Big Wheel | ( ) | ( ) | ( ) |

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